

Reading for Research: Scholarly Publications in the Worklife of Researchers

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A bit about me...



Academic Year 2016-2017

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

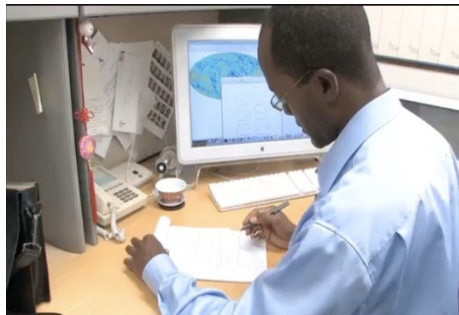
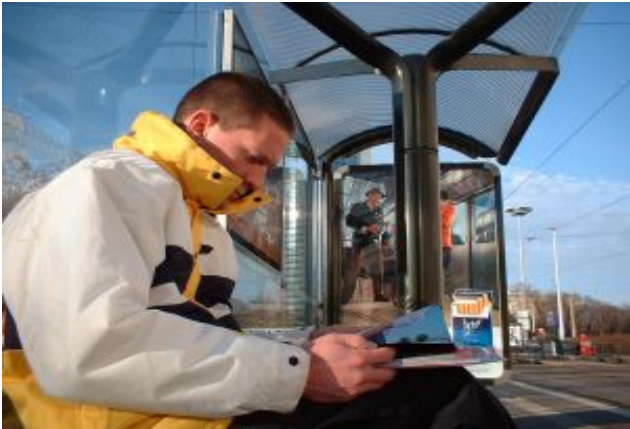


Tennessee



Ongoing Research Questions

- How do researchers access, read, and use scholarly publications in their work?
 - What is the value of reading to their work?
 - How should scholarly publications and systems change (or not) in the future to better meet their needs?



In the information context economist Machlup described 2 types of value:

1. **purchase or exchange value:** what one is willing to pay for information in money and/or time, and
2. **use value:** the favorable consequences derived from reading and using the information.

4 types of questions

1. Demographic

2. Recollection

3. Critical Incident

4. Comments

Therefore, insights
into

both READERS and
READINGS

Critical incident of last reading

“The following questions in this section refer to the **SCHOLARLY ARTICLE** YOU READ MOST RECENTLY, even if you had read the **article** previously. Note that this last reading may not be typical, but will help us establish the range of patterns in reading.”



Finland Reading Study

- Online survey sent by FinELib to librarians who then distributed it to their academic staff; some also sent directly
- 527 total respondents (although the number for any one question may vary)
- Follow-up interviews

A few preliminary findings...

1. Scholarly articles are important for academic work
2. Researchers read many other types of sources
3. Many readings come from the library
4. Not every reader is the same
5. Some things should change (and some things shouldn't)

1. Scholarly articles are important for academic work



Researchers read a lot ...article readings per month

20 readings per month
on average by Finnish
researchers

X

12 months per year =
240 article readings/year

2016, Finland



And they spend time reading

42 minutes per article
reading
x 20 readings per
month = 14
hours/month
X 12 months/year = 168
hours/year
OR 21 8-hour work days



2016, Finland



Outcomes of article readings

- #1 Inspire new thinking or ideas (54%)
- #2 Helped justify my work (47%)
- #3 Improved the results (21%)
- #4 Narrowed/broadened/changed focus (17%)
- #5 Saved time or other resources (10%)
-
- #10 Wasted my time (1%)

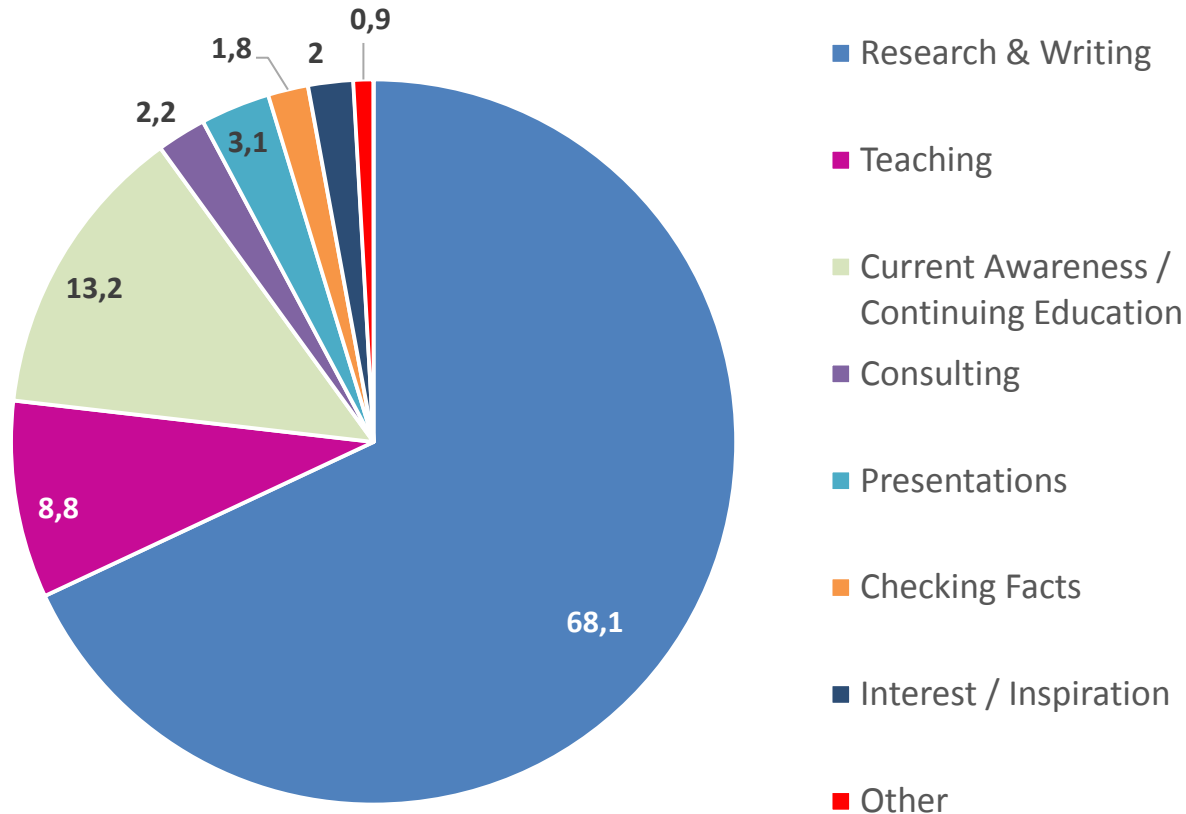


Scholarly articles are rated important by readers

- 80% of readings are rated important, very important or absolutely essential
- Only 2% are “not at all important”



They read articles for many different purposes...



n=454, 2016, Finland

Importance of article reading varies by purpose (5= absolutely essential – 1=not at all important)

Checking or verifying facts (3.8)

Research or writing (3.7)

Preparing presentations (3.6)

Teaching (3.3)

Consulting/advising (3.0)

Current awareness (2.8)

Personal interest/pleasure (2.1)

Work Centric

Peripheral

Readings for research are...

- Read longer
- Ranked more highly valuable to purpose
- Most often come from the library

Readings to verify facts are...

- Read with greater care
- Less likely to be skimmed
- More likely to be cited

2. Researchers read many other types of materials for work



Reading of other publications (M=69/month)

News articles	48.6
Magazine or trade journals	8.6
Blogs	4.3
Scholarly books / book chapters	2.9
Govt. documents, technical or research reports	2.5
Conference proceeding articles	2.4
Fiction	1.1
Other	1.1
Other Non-fiction	0.8

n=454, 2016, Finland



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• CURRENT AWARENESS
• RESEARCH/WRITING
• PERSONAL/PLEASURE

n=454, 2016, Finland



Research & writing is the most likely principal purpose of scholarly reading

68%



Article Readings

62%



Book Readings

42%



Other Publication Readings

3%



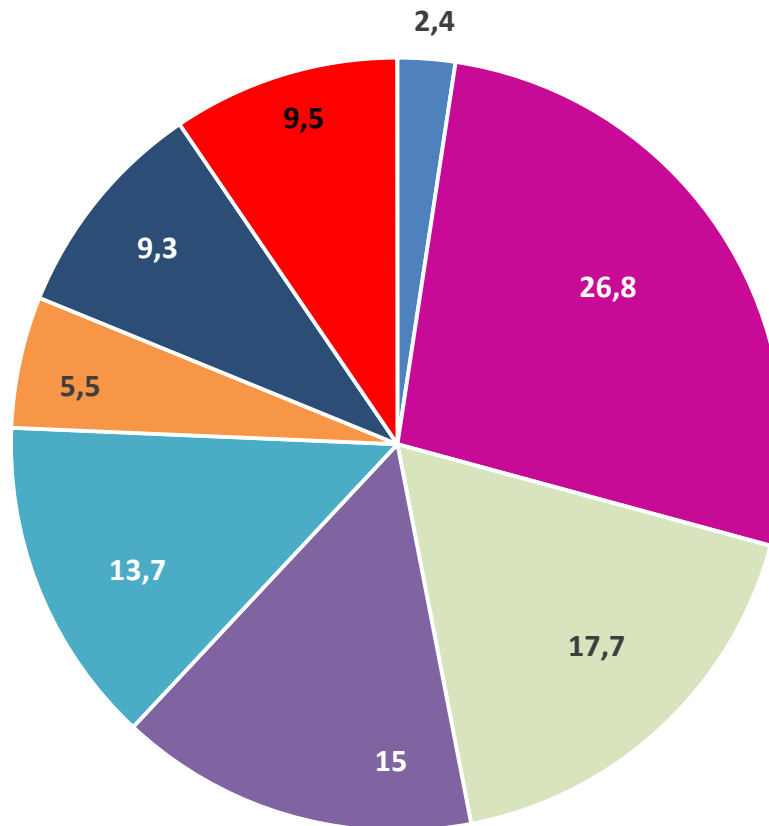
News

n=403, Finland, 2016

3. Many readings come from the library
(but not all)



Source of article readings (for all purposes)



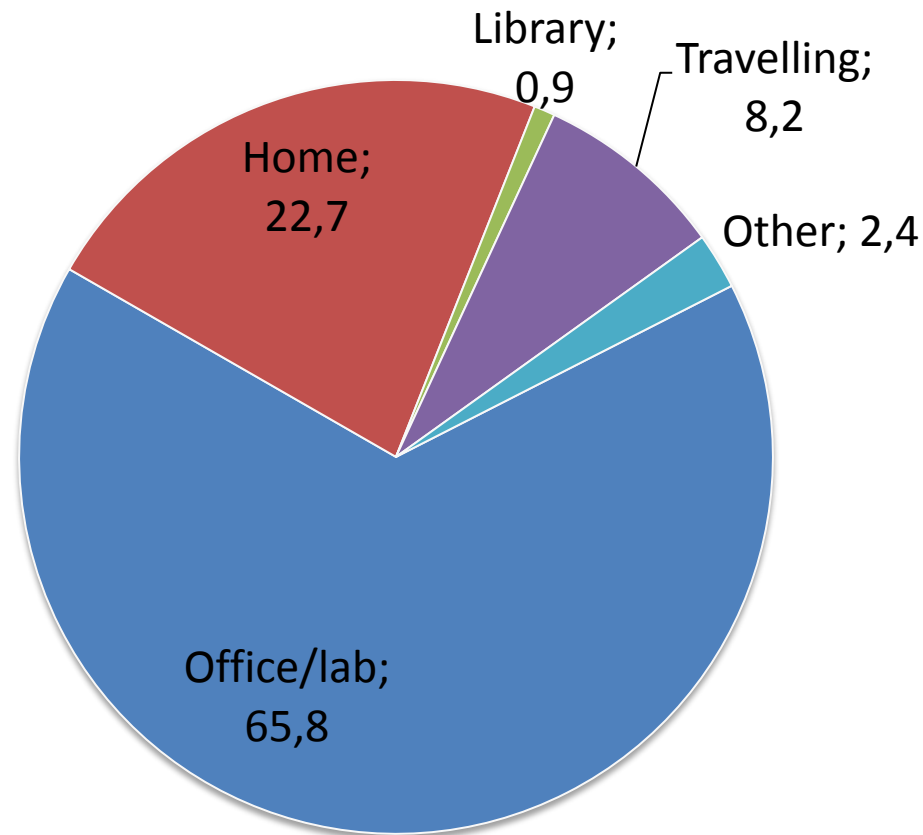
- Personal subscriptions
- Library subscriptions
- School / dept subscriptions
- Institutional repository
- Websites
- Research social networks
- Copy from a colleague
- Other

Library provided articles are...

- ...most often for research or writing
- ...more important to principal purpose
- ...more likely to be cited (already or in the future)

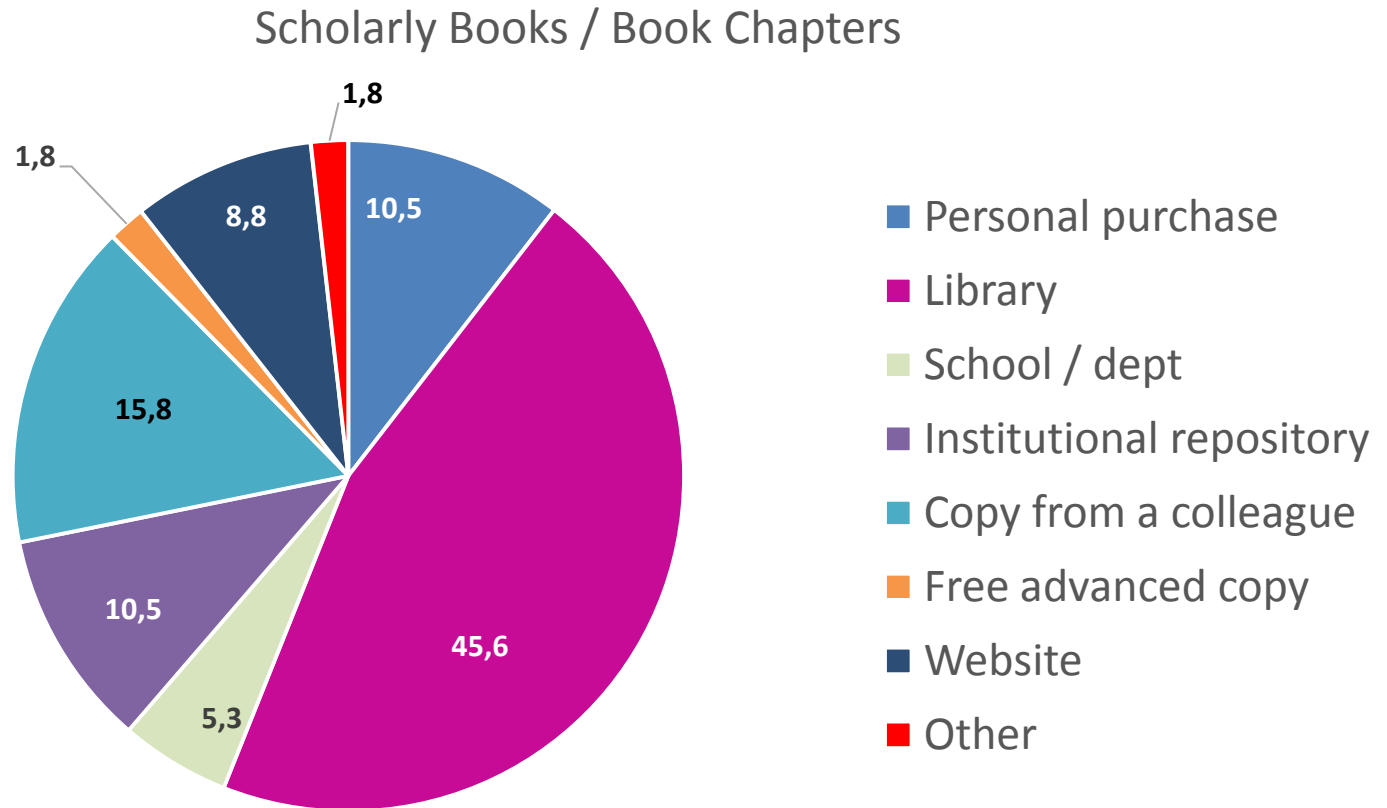


Just because they read articles *from* the library (all article readings)...



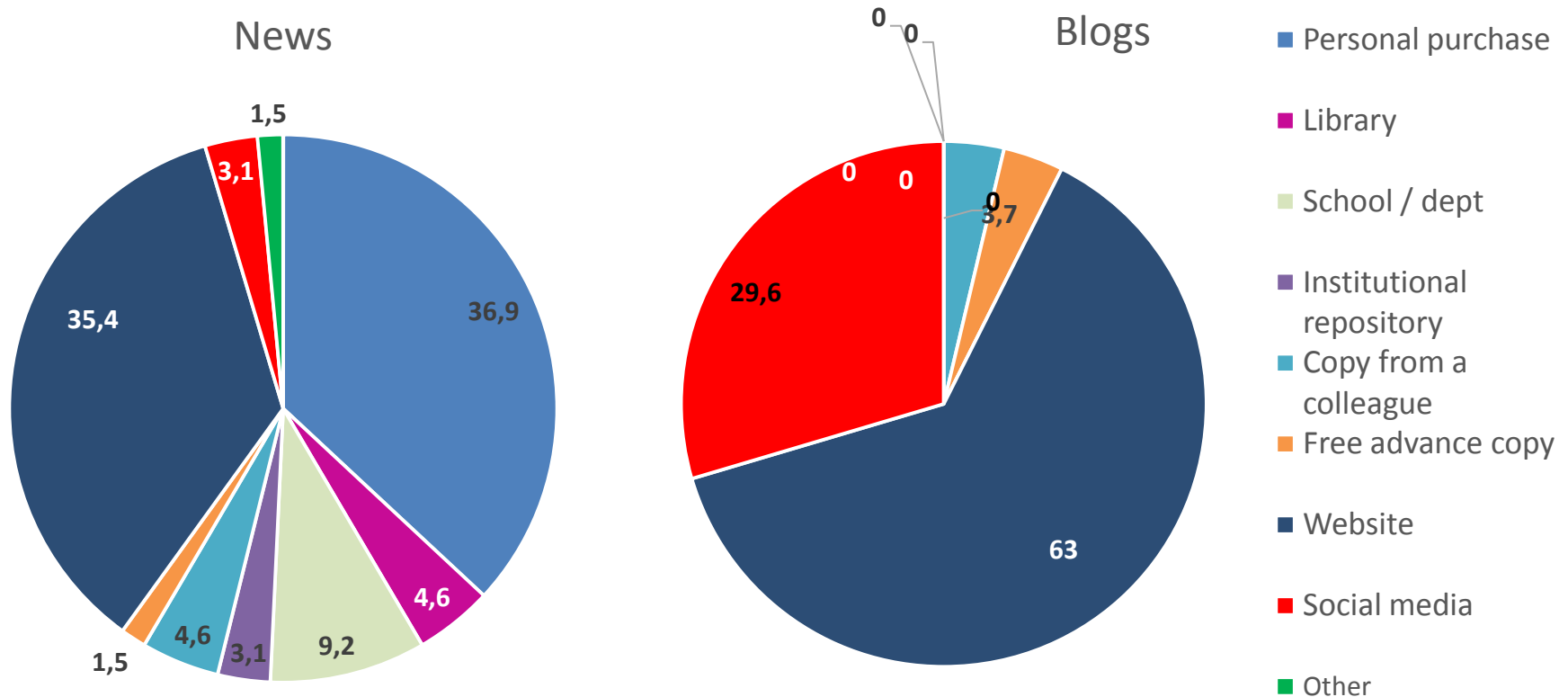
n=453, Finland, 2016

Book readings come from the library...



n=451, 2016, Finland

Some readings do not...



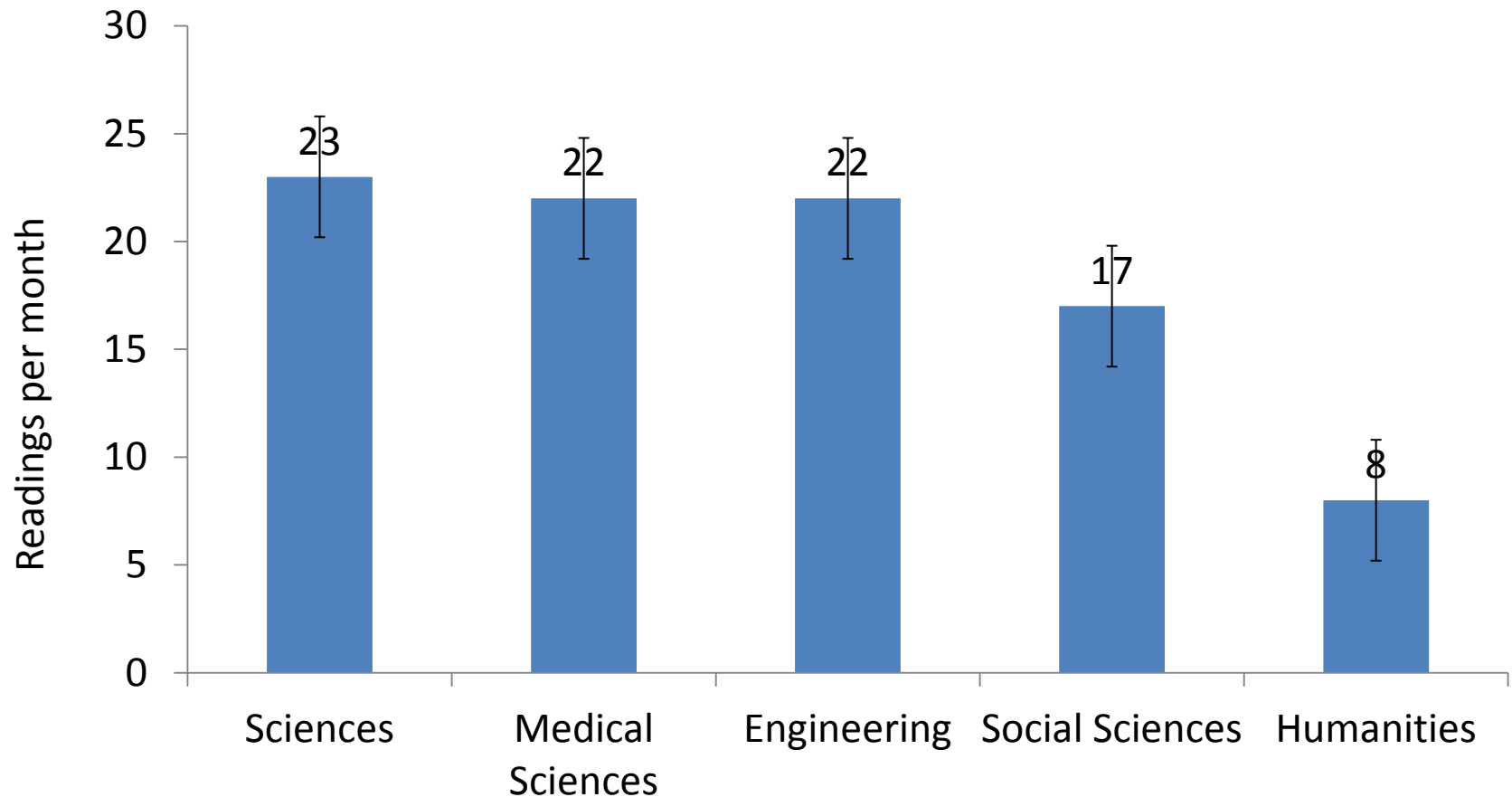
n=451, 2016, Finland

4. Not every reader is the same



Article Readings differ by discipline

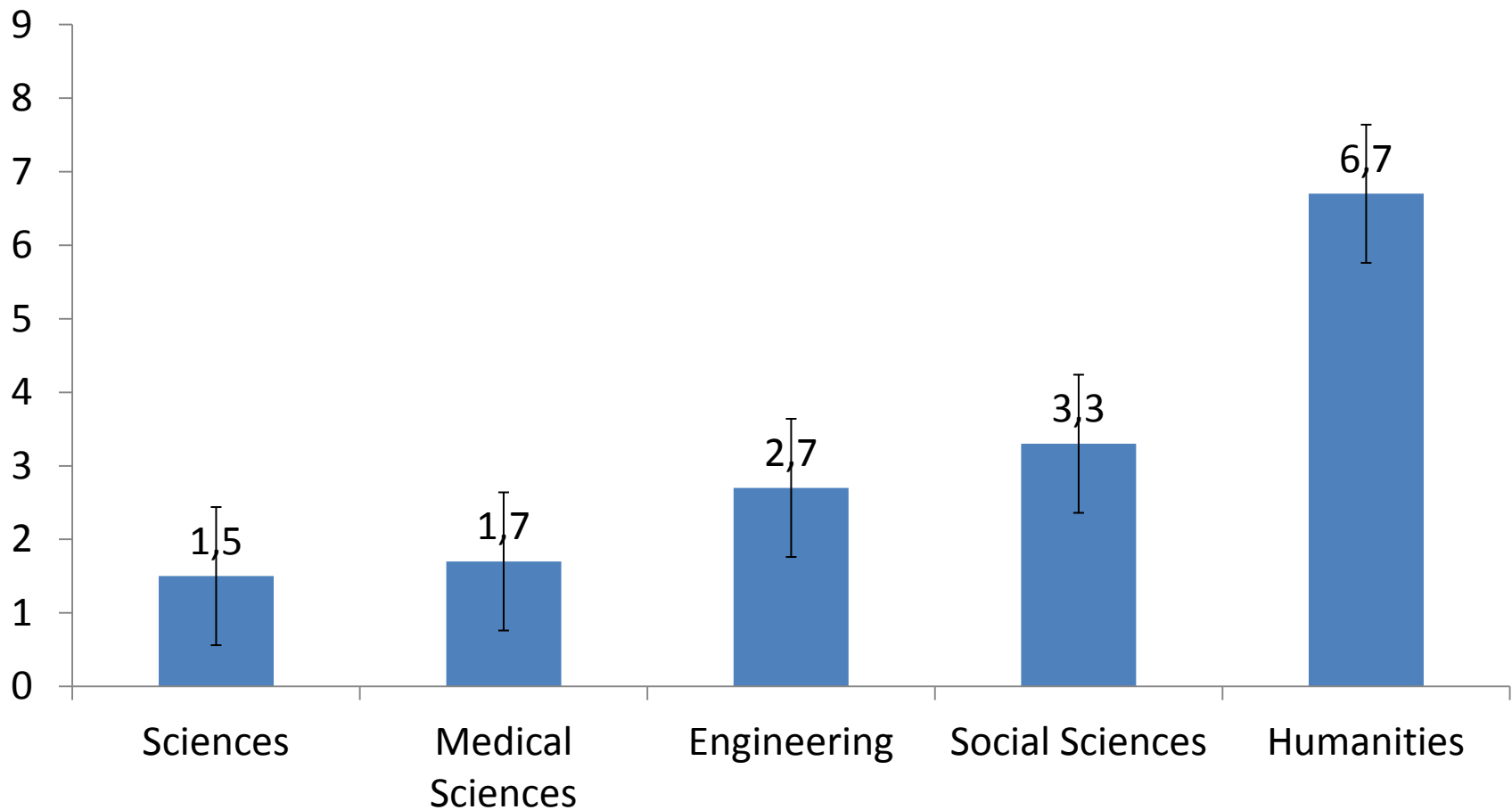
(average per month)



n=439, Finland, 2016



Book or chapter readings differ by discipline (average per month)



n=450, Finland, 2016



Additional disciplinary differences



Medicine, life sciences, & physical sciences consider journal article readings most important.

Social scientists and humanities / fine arts less likely to read for collaborative purposes; are more likely to read older articles.



Does age of reader matter?

There is no age difference in use of social media based on age



Age sometimes matters...

- **30 and under:**
 - Read more often at the office
 - Spend more time per article reading
 - More often get readings from colleagues
- **61+:**
 - Read more books/book chapters
 - Read more from print
 - Read more fiction
 - Read more in their native language

Portrait of a 'successful' academic who has...



- ...won an award in the last two years.
- ...published about 9 works in the last two years.

Reading characteristics of a 'successful' academic:

- Reads a greater variety of materials.
- Spends more time per reading.
- Uses the library for articles, but not as much for other types of publications.
- Considers listservs, cloud services, research social networks, and collaborative authoring platforms to be important to work.



5. Some things need to change (and some shouldn't)



More changes desired

Ability to make
my own notes
easily

I don't like the
direction this is
going

Links to cited
works and links
to research data

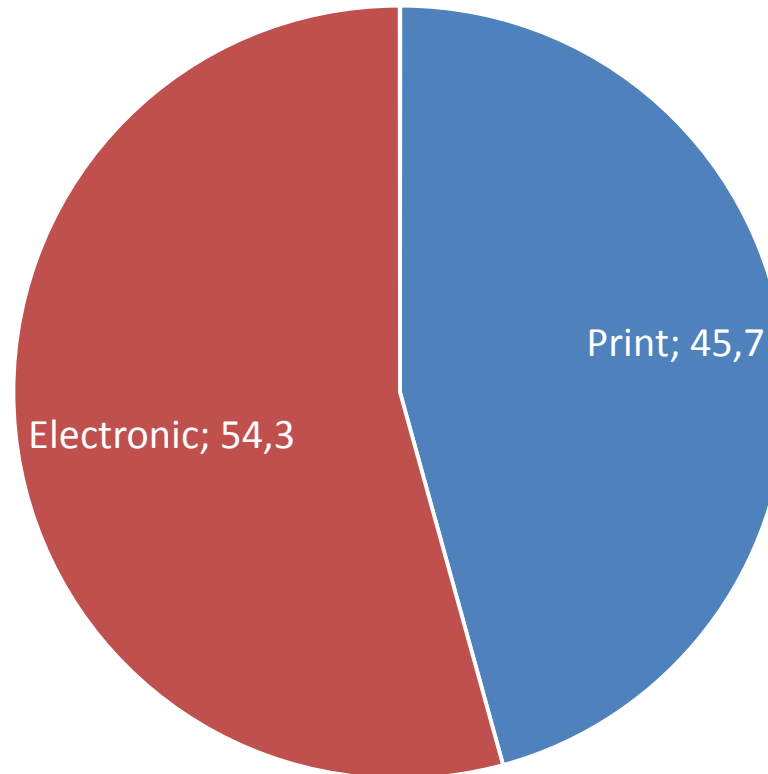
Desired
Future?

Open peer review
with public
comment
functionality

Open access for
all

E-reader (i.e.,
Kindle)
compatibility

Just because an article came from an electronic source...



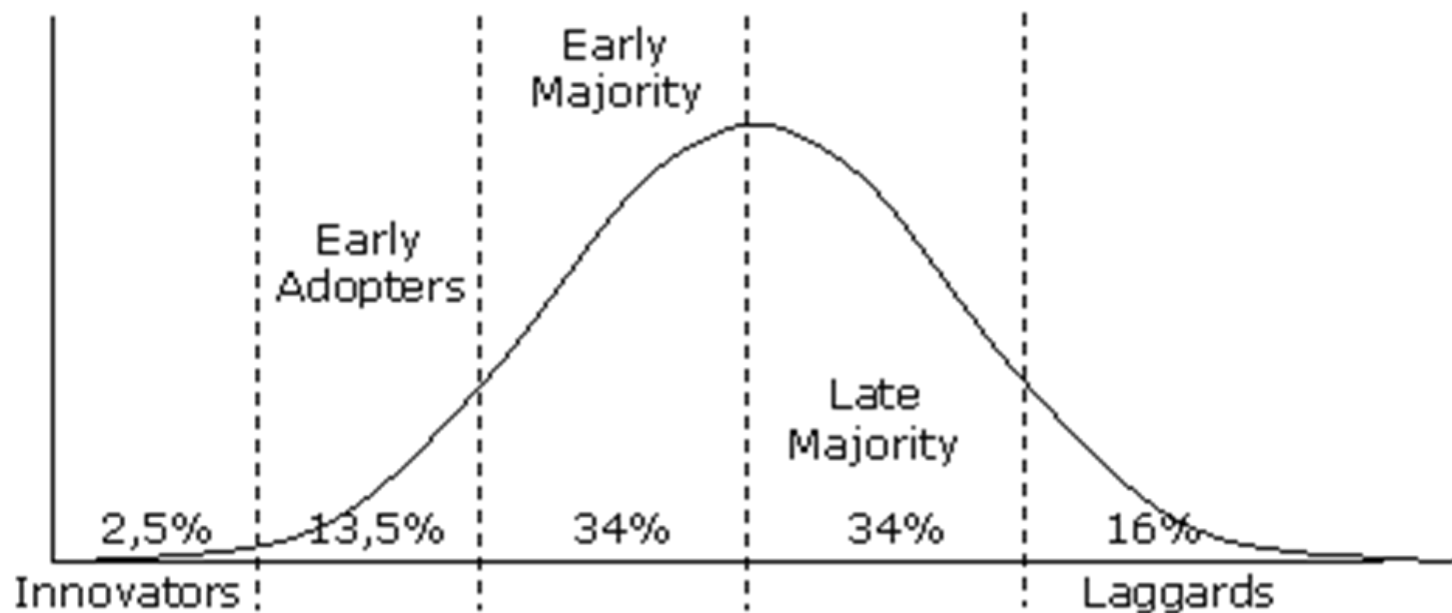
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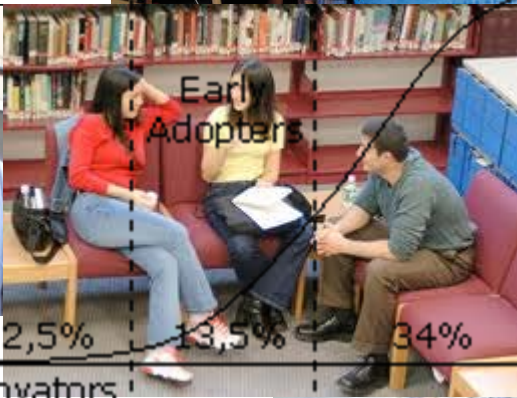
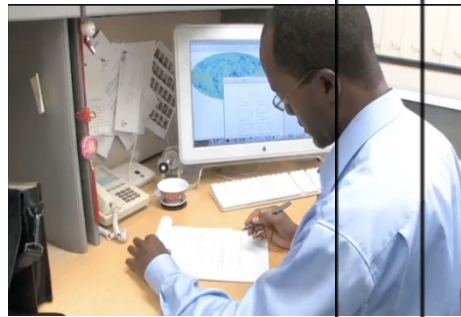
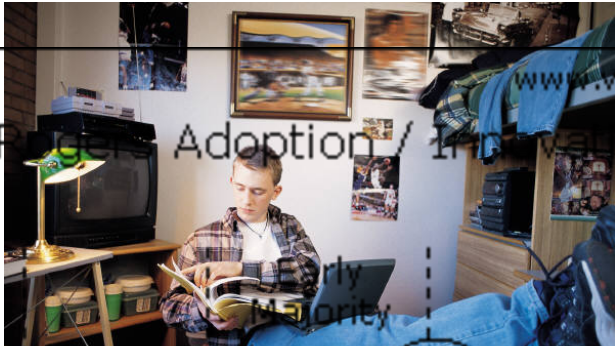


Change must...

- Fit with work patterns
- Be easier than current way
- Allow reading with all devices
- Still allow printing
- Support open access
- Recognize range of behaviors

Rogers Adoption / Innovation Curve





www.valuebasedmanagement.net
Adoption / Innovation Curve

Early Adopters

Late Majority

Laggards

2,5% 13,5% 34%

34% 16%

Innovators

Some final thoughts on value...

- Think of value in terms of quality/outcomes, not just quantity/downloads
- Measure value in the context of worklife
- Remember the paradox of exchange value (the library strives to save the time of the reader)

Thank you!

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the **Fulbright** Center